

How H5N1 Avian Flu Differs from Seasonal Flu

To date, ALL cases of human Avian flu have been reported in Southeast Asia and Turkey.

Avian flu is most common in children.

All cases have been associated with exposure to sick or dead poultry, or rarely, sick affected persons.

Symptoms of H5N1 Avian Influenza in humans start with symptoms similar to seasonal flu, but quickly become much worse:

- Persistent, high fever. Higher fever than expected into the 103 - 104 degrees Fahrenheit or higher range.
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Severe muscle aches

The even more severe symptoms and findings that distinguish Avian Influenza from Seasonal Influenza among the victims in SE Asia and Turkey began within about 2-6 days after the early flu symptoms began, and have been reported in many cases as:

- Severe breathing difficulty (such as acute respiratory distress)
- Severe pneumonia
- Leukopenia: abnormally low white blood cell count. (Normal white blood count is generally between 4,000 - 10,000 cells per cubic millimeter).
- And/or other rare, but severe and life-threatening complications of the nervous system or digestive system.
- Immediate hospitalization with breathing life-support is required.
- In SE Asia, cases that received oseltavir early (within about 4-6 days of onset of symptoms) were more often associated with survival.

Source: CDC Scott F. Dowell, MD, MPH



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